

Linda Clair
Seven-day Meditation Retreat
Kallara Conference Centre – September 2019
Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 8b – Saturday morning discussion session

Question: I was just wondering about the man in Adelaide who realised. You said in one of the interviews that he was very determined. I thought it might be inspirational to hear his story.

Linda: Umm, yes, he was incredibly determined but probably no more determined than some of the people here. So I don't want to talk about him when he's not here. But yes he was incredibly determined.

Question: Can I also say something about Eckhart Tolle because I feel his experience validates everything in your approach or the Zen approach about grounding in your body because he realised from a place of deep suffering and it was very sudden. When he had the thought, "I can't live with myself," he realised there isn't two of him, there's only one. His realisation was so sudden that he could only be on a park bench for a couple of years. I've also seen an interview of someone else on YouTube who realised suddenly but he was a seeker. He obviously wasn't grounded because he became really skinny and had no desire to eat and look after himself.

Linda: It doesn't mean he wasn't grounded – I don't know who you're talking about – but not necessarily. You do go through periods where food is not very attractive. It all tastes the same and there's not such an attraction to eating. But that changes. (laughing)

Your relationship with your body does change. It is important, you have to stay grounded, but you don't place the same importance on it as before because there's not this obsession with it. That obsession goes. So you can tend to not be so interested in keeping health and that sort of stuff. But it doesn't mean that you're not grounded in your body. And often when there's an incredible amount of energy coming in you can become a bit hyper and don't feel like eating and doing certain stuff. But it doesn't mean you're not grounded.

Question: He barely could leave his home for a couple years.

Linda: When I started teaching I was in the Adelaide Hills and I had a place there that we used as centre with my partner. I really hardly went anywhere for about five years. I went occasionally to go see my Mum and my daughter. Other than that I travelled very little. I just hung around there gardening, doing stuff, doing retreats, just grounding more and more.

And it was good because it all started slowly. At the time we said we'd give it a couple of years and see how it goes. Sometimes there'd only be a few people there but it gradually built up. And that's a good thing too, rather than having a lot of people all at once. Some people aren't ready for that as a teacher. I know I wasn't. It's better that it gradually builds up.

I'm not sure who you're talking about. And Eckhart Tolle, I know he went to see Barry Long quite a bit in London when Barry Long was there. So he did have teachers, and I think it took him quite a while to acknowledge that, because when I first read about him he didn't acknowledge that at all

and yet what he said was very, very similar to things that Barry Long had been saying, almost word for word. In fact the Barry Long people were interested in suing him because it was just so word-for-word Barry Long. I haven't really looked at Eckhart Tolle much. I've tried a few times but hasn't really interested me. But yes, he's probably enlightened. I haven't met him. I'd say he is but he's never particularly appealed to me but that doesn't mean anything really.

So yes, lots of things happen. Everyone's also got their feelings about how an enlightened being should be: how they should behave, what they should look like, what they should wear, what they should eat. And I know I had that. But you just don't know. You don't know how it's going to be and you don't know what it's like until you're in this state. And it's totally different to anything you would have ever imagined. So anyone who's truly realised, you can't judge because they just cope with it as they can.

Question: I think you said yesterday that there are some milestones on the path to enlightenment? Is that correct.

Linda: I can't remember saying it but I probably would have said that.

Question: And what would they be? (laughter)

Linda: Well, there are lots of minor ones. A major one is realising that you're not your mind, which many people have. I think some people have and they're tempted to teach because they don't really want to do anymore work. There are lots of them, lots of milestones.

Questions: So realising you're not the body would come before realising you're not the mind?

Linda: No, realising you're not the body is the big one. Realising you're not the mind is the initial one. And then once you've realised you're not the body, then there's another big one where you realise the absolute and the relative, and the relationship between the two. Well, it stops being a relationship and they merge. When you first realise it's like you're catapulted into this absolute state and that's why you can tend to do things like just hang out and isolate yourself and feel, "Ah, I just want to be by myself and not really do much." It's like you're establishing yourself in that state, and it can be very difficult dealing with the relative world. But eventually you see that they're the same. It's like you come into balance with it.

Its why I teach as I do and advise people in this way to balance yourself as much as possible in both, while you're going through this part of the practice, because when you do realise you will be more balanced rather than too extreme in one thing.

Question: If you reach a milestone does it mean you can't go back to what you experienced or thought before that milestone?

Linda: Yes, I'd say so. That's what a realisation is, a milestone is a realisation, and there are a number of realisations. There's the big one and then there are a number of realisations after that but they're different. There's not that suffering. It's just very different.

And I'd say the realisations continue because you accept fully, "Ah, there's really no end to this." There's not point where you go, "No, that's it, there's nothing else I have to do, nothing." And that becomes joyful. Before the major realisation, all you want is for this to end. You want to resolve something. But all you see is that there's nothing to be resolved and there's no end. Once you realise that everything changes.

Question: Does it mean there's no more self-effort after enlightenment?

Linda: Not in the same way. It doesn't mean that you can just rest. You can never rest on your laurels. You can never assume anything. You need to keep really alert and as humble as possible. But there can be the tendency, particularly initially, to do the opposite: become quite arrogant and competitive and go, "There's nothing more. I'm perfect. This is it." So there can be that tendency probably in everyone initially.

Question: It's hard to believe enlightened and yet competitive and arrogant. Maybe it's just the idea I have of it.

Linda: Yes, it's the idea you have of it. So it can disturb people when they do realise and there's still that stuff there, because there is still stuff there. You don't automatically become this saint, and you have to see that. If you are teaching, in particular, it can be disturbing for some people.

I didn't find it disturbing myself because I used teaching to really go deeper. But it can be disturbing because you do know that there's more stuff there and yet you're this authority figure, in a way. Yes, it can affect people, make them a bit unstable. Not everyone is meant to be a teacher. I think there are some people who – this is how they express it – and other people express it in different ways. I never wanted to be a teacher. When I was going through my practice I didn't go, "Oh yes, I want to be a teacher sitting up there." There was no way, I didn't even consider it.

Question: So why did you become a teacher?

Linda: It just happened. I was actually in France just having a break and I just suddenly realised I wanted to be a teacher – or not to be a teacher, I wanted to share this. It was just so amazing, it was too much to keep to myself so I wanted to share it.

Question: You would think that would be the main motivation of many people who are enlightened, to share this because you see other people suffering.

Linda: Yes, I'd say so. But then teaching – so there's so much involved. You think it's just sitting up there sharing it. But there's so much involved. And you can subtly start to get into your ego about it. So you've got to be really careful and alert.

Question: I've been feeling really grounded and balanced on this retreat with you. The combination of sitting and doing the work task everyday have been good. But on my morning walk the other day I had a really deep fear experience. It's the first time I've been able to see and watch the fear in me without reacting or having it take me over. It was almost incredible to be able to see the fear in me – the first time. I've been waiting for this to happen because all this time I spent grounding. The more grounded I've become, the clearer it is and the more clearly I can see what's going on. So it's just keep on grounding. It feels very true what you said about being grounded. So even now I'm experiencing the fear because I'm talking about it. It's very difficult to talk about the fear because it's in my body right now, I can feel it.

Linda: Good, it's good that you talked about it.

Question: The fear tends to be around my heart or chest and it's very difficult to speak when it's here.

Linda: Okay, thanks.

Question: I read the other day in an Adyashanti book, and I'd heard it before, that consciousness, through a human being's awakening or enlightenment, has an opportunity to experience itself or...

Linda: Express itself?

Question: Yes, so there was the question why would it want to do that? And then there's a state that sometimes happens with me where – it's a completely allowing state – where I can allow life to hold me. I can't contrive it, it just sort of comes. What happens then is love basically. I feel filled with love. That's the closest thing I get to in relation to that consciousness thing. What would you say about the consciousness thing? Is it about love?

Linda: Yes! It's all about love. Pure intelligence is love. That's what you're expressing when you realise – just pure love.

Question: It's not a doing thing at all.

Linda: No, it's sort of the opposite. You stop trying to control and manipulate and you let life take you over – that incredible intelligence takes you over, God – some people would call it – God realised. It's like you step back and just let it take you over.

Question: In those moments it's almost an overwhelming feeling. And of course part of me wants more of it but you can't do it.

Linda: What do you mean you can't?

Question: It's like you can't seek it. It's an allowing thing.

Linda: No, but you do have to have that drive to do this. Even though you can say, in truth, you shouldn't seek it and all that stuff, you have to really want it. You have to want to be overwhelmed by it. You have to desperately want it.

Question: If you still feel pain when you sit, you know you're not enlightened, right?

Linda: It depends.

Question: Could you feel pain sometimes?

Linda: Sometimes, not much now. Yes, at first. No, not much, and it was different, hardly anything.

Question: It's hard to keep sitting?

Linda: It's hard, yes.

Question: I think that's why I stopped sitting at home, because it was hard, I just didn't want to do it.

Linda: I worked it out recently – I sit like this all day for two months a year, solid sitting. It's good. It's always changing. It feels very at home. I sit on a zafu and it's like, "Ahh, home."

You can tend to feel once you're realised you don't need to sit. But you do, it's just as important as before. We're still absorbing more and more energy. You need to keep grounded, you need to keep humble. But it becomes a joy to sit rather than hard work. Peter said once that he asked these Burmese Buddhist monks who are enlightened why they still sat and they said, "To enjoy the fruits of the practice." So thank you everyone. I don't want to single out anyone, because everyone's put so much into it. It's a joy.